REMARKS

On page 2 of his office action, the Examiner again rejected claims 3 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,687,232 to Zimmerman.

As previously argued by applicant, Zimmerman does not disclose "a unitary pipe bushing (**38**) for use in joining a first length of pipe to a second length of pipe. . . ." Instead, the reducer bushing **38** of Zimmerman fits into the bushing socket **18** of the joint housing **12** of a slip joint **10**, it provides a piston block **49**, which limits the inward travel of the piston section **26** of the piston pipe **24**, consequently limiting the collapse of the slip joint **10** (col. 4, ll. 35-68 through col. 5, l. 1). "The reducer bushing **38** of Zimmerman has a two-stage axial bore **44** which defines a pipe socket **46** and a radially reduced bore **48** of substantially the same internal diameter as that of the piping to be joined or mended by the slip joint **10**." (col. 4, ll. 41-45). Further, the end of the reducer bushing **38** is designed to rest against a bushing seat **19** on the axial bore of the slip joint **10**. (col. 4, ll. 50-56). Its hexagonal grip **40** is probably used for handling the reducer bushing **38**.

Nonetheless, in reviewing the Examiner's rejection of claims 3 and 4, applicant has amended claim 3 to more clearly claim the subject matter of the present invention, deleting the imprecise word "substantially" and replacing "nominally" with "up to .05 inches." Claim 3, as amended, is not anticipated by Zimmerman. As noted previously, Zimmerman does not disclose a unitary bushing having an outwardly projecting round flange with a lateral thickness equal to the wall thickness of the second length of pipe. Further, Zimmerman does not disclose a bushing having an inwardly-projecting lip with a lateral thickness equal to the wall thickness of the first length of pipe. Further, Zimmerman does not disclose a

PAGE 5/7 * RCVD AT 5/9/2005 5:32:46 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-1/2 * DNIS:8729306 * CSID:2813634066 * DURATION (mm-ss):02-20

bushing with a bore having a uniform diameter up to .05 inches larger than the outer diameter of the first length of pipe. Instead Zimmerman discloses a bushing having a two-stage axial bore; each stage has a different diameter. Finally, Zimmerman's bushing does not have an inwardly-projecting lip at its bottom end. Claim 3, as amended, should be allowable over Zimmerman. Claim 4, which depends from amended claim 3, should also be allowable.

On page 4 of the office action, the Examiner rejected claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Zimmerman, citing principles of inherency.

Applicant has amended claim 5 so it is consistent with the amendments made to claim 3. As amended, claim 5 should be allowable over Zimmerman. The device used in the method of claim 5 if not the same device disclosed in Zimmerman, for the reasons stated *supra*. Claim 6, which depends on claim 5, should be allowable as well.

In light of the foregoing arguments, and upon entry of the amendments, allowance of claims 3 through 6 should be in order, and is respectfully requested.

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PAGE 6/7 * RCVD AT 5/9/2005 5:32:46 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-1/2 * DNIS:8729306 * CSID:2813634066 * DURATION (mm-ss):02-20